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ABSTRACT

THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM:

A VIEW FROM THE COMMANDER

David K. Cannon, M.A.
The University of Oklahoma
Advisor: Dr. Mack Palmer

SCOPE AND METHOD OF STUDY:

This study examined the relationship between an Air
Force Public Affairs Officer and an Air Force Commander. The
respondents were randomly selected Air Force Commanders from
Air Base Groups and Air Base wings. These individuals
answered a 27-item Likert scale semantic differential
questionnaire designed to elicit their responses on a variety
of questions dealing with their relationships with Public
Affairs Officers. Cross-tabulation and factor analysis were
used to analyze data and categorize the respondents on the
basis of their agreement or disagreement with similar
statements.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The factor analysis showed there were two groupings of
commanders within the group sampled. The first group was
extremely positive in their relationship with Public Affairs
and were identified by their thinking that Internal

vi

Information is the most important function of Public Affairs. The second group generally had a positive relationship with Public Affairs but were categorized by their thinking that Community Relations is the most important function of Public Affairs.

Through a cross-tabulation, it was found that there was no support to the contention that a junior-ranking Public Affairs Officer was perceived less competent by a Commander, or that Commanders with no previous command experience were less supportive of Public Affairs, or that a Public Affairs Officer has less promotion potential than an officer with an operational background.

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The purpose of this questionnaire is to ascertain the value and/or contribution of research accomplished by students or faculty of the Air Force Institute of Technology (AU). It would be greatly appreciated if you would complete the following questionnaire and return it to:

AFIT/NR
Wright-Patterson AFB OH 45433

RESEARCH TITLE: The Air Force Public Affairs Program: A View From The Commander

AUTHOR: David K. Cannon

RESEARCH ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

1. Did this research contribute to a current Air Force project?

( ) a. YES   ( ) b. NO

2. Do you believe this research topic is significant enough that it would have been researched (or contracted) by your organization or another agency if AFIT had not?

( ) a. YES   ( ) b. NO

3. The benefits of AFIT research can often be expressed by the equivalent value that your agency achieved/received by virtue of AFIT performing the research. Can you estimate what this research would have cost if it had been accomplished under contract or if it had been done in-house in terms of manpower and/or dollars?

( ) a. MAN-YEARS _____   ( ) b. $_____

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( ) a. HIGHLY   ( ) b. SIGNIFICANT   ( ) c. SLIGHTLY   ( ) d. OF NO
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5. AFIT welcomes any further comments you may have on the above questions, or any additional details concerning the current application, future potential, or other value of this research. Please use the bottom part of this questionnaire for your statement(s).

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ORGANIZATION   LOCATION

STATEMENT(s):

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM:

A VIEW FROM THE COMMANDER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the

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MASTER OF ARTS

By

DAVID K. CANNON

Norman, Oklahoma

1984

THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM:

A VIEW FROM THE COMMANDER

A THESIS

APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

By:

Bruce Hinson
Bruce Hinson

Mack Palmer
Mack Palmer

Bob Carrell
Bob Carrell

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special acknowledgement must also go to Air Force Public Affairs Officers and Commanders who took the time and effort to respond to the questionnaire. Their support was truly appreciated.

Thanks also go to my mother and father, Bob and Myra Cannon, for their support and guidance through the years.

And finally, thanks of a different kind must go to my wife, Jan, who was forced to put up with me for a year, and my children, Christa and Braden, who give hope for the future.

To each and everyone of you, thank you so very much. Your help was truly appreciated.

To Jan

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Self-perception is an important part of successful job accomplishment and may be defined as an individual's ability to respond differentially to his/her own behavior and its controlling variables.[1] Current discussion in the literature deals with a worker's attitudes and perceptions concerning his/her job and focuses specifically on job dissatisfaction; the traits and attributes of a particular job that a worker would rate negative. According to Edward Locke, over 3,350 articles, books, and dissertations have been published on the topic of job satisfaction.[2]

Research done at the University of Oklahoma's School of Journalism and Mass Communication has even put job satisfaction into the context of an Air Force Public Affairs Officer. In a thesis submitted to the graduate faculty in 1976, then Captain Mike Gannon concluded that prior

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[1]Daryl Bem, "Self Perception: An Alternative Interpretation of Cognitive Dissonance Phenomena," The Study of Attitude Change (1969), pp. 88-89.

[2]U.S., Department of Labor, Manpower Research Monograph, No. 30 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974), pp. 1-2.

experience in a communications field did not have any bearing on the job perceptions of a Public Affairs Officer. Likewise, Gannon found that there was no support for the contention that prior Air Force experience in an operational career field (pilot, navigator) would have a negative influence on how a Public Affairs Officer views his or her job. Gannon did find that the higher rank a Public Affairs Officer held, the more positive view he/she held toward his/her job and the Public Affairs career field.[1]

But to date, no research has been done to link the perceptions a senior or boss holds toward a subordinate and that subordinate's job performance. Studies in psychology have shown that an individual will generally live up to or down to the views that other individuals hold of him or her.

In the context of the United States Air Force, everyone works for a Commander. As such, the Public Affairs program Air Force-wide is a function of command.[2] In that regard, the perception a Commander has of the Public Affairs program and the Public Affairs Officer who carries out that program will have a direct bearing on the effectiveness of a Public Affairs Officer and the Public Affairs program.

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[1]Mike Gannon, "Air Force Information Officers' Perceptions of Their Jobs" (Master's Degree Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1976), p. v.

[2]U.S., Department of the Air Force, Public Policies and Procedures, 1982 (Washington, D.C., 1982), p. 10.

From this perspective, the title of this study is: THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM: A VIEW FROM THE COMMANDER. The research question under study is: what is the relationship between an Air Force Commander's perception of a Public Affairs Officer and that Public Affairs Officer's effectiveness in carrying out the Air Force Public Affairs program?

A related work on perceptions that executives hold toward staff members was done in a joint 1980 study by The Wall Street Journal and Gallup.

In that study, "fewer than one in six executives of big firms says he's very satisfied with the performance of public relations specialists. In large and medium sized companies, 45 percent of chief executives say they're fairly satisifed with the efforts of PR people. In small companies, 36 percent of bosses share that view."[1]

Specific comments from executives concerning the public relations specialists ranged from good to poor. A representative sample follows:

> There has been a significant improvement in PR specialists in the past decade. They now have better communications skills and a better business concept.[2]
>
> Public relations people are intellectually lazy. They're leftovers

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[1] Frank Allen, "How Executives Rate Accountants, Lawyers, PR Specialists and Others," The Wall Street Journal (December 2, 1980):33.

[2] Ibid., p. 33.

who weren't very good at what they used to do.[1]

"The head of a medium-sized company complained about a PR agency that 'actually prepared material that was the opposite of my company's policies.' And the chief of another medium-sized firm asserts that PR specialists generally have 'an inadequate knowledge of business and an exaggerated sense of their own importance.'"[2]

Chester Burger, in "How Management Views Public Relations," lends further credence to support the findings of The Wall Street Journal/Gallup survey.

In the eyes of the Chief Executive or the chief operating officer of the company, those involved in employee communications are not really important. The reason is that the employee communications people too often are off at the fringes. They're talking about the company picnic. In one corporation I know, a readership study of the company newspaper found that the "most read" item was the menu for the company cafeteria. When the CEO looks at public relations professionals, in the light of all the severe problems he's facing, instead of seeing us as a help to him in solving his problems, he sees us involved in activities of marginal importance. He sees us on the periphery. He sees us dealing with activities that, even if we do them well, aren't significant to the corporation.[3]

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[1]Ibid., p. 33.

[2]Ibid., p. 33.

[3]Chester Burger, "How Management Views Public Relations," Public Relations Journal (Winter 1983):28.

David Sturges, in an unpublished paper, breaks Burger's aforementioned concept down to the reality of survival for a corporate, governmental, or military public relations/affairs professional.

> It will be necessary for the strategic public relations specialist to be able to communicate with the chief executive Commander for military PAOs in the language of business and its concepts. It will be necessary for the strategic public relations specialist to understand the organization's dynamics and the environments within which the system operates. It will be necessary for such a specialist to address the contribution public relations can make in terms of the success of the organization in adapting to and profiting in its turbulent operational environment--the basis of the boss' business language.[1]

Burger discusses Sturges' above concept in terms of credibility. "We have a long way to go to gain credibility with management."[2] Burger contends that public relations professionals need to become an active and effective part of the executives' (or the Commander's) staff.

> Management does not need from us any more criticism. Management does not need to be told by us all the things it is doing wrong. Management needs from us positive suggestions to do things better. To the extent that we can do

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[1]David L. Sturges, "A Model of Organization Applied to Public Relations and Communication," p. 9.

[2]Burger, "How Management Views Public Relations," p. 28.

that, we will find management more
responsive to us than ever before.[1]

This perspective of becoming a part of the solution is
summed up by the chairman of the board for J. P. Morgan and
Company. "I don't want people coming to me with problems.
I've got all the problems I can handle. I don't want any
more problems. I want people coming to me with problems and
recommended solutions."[2] However, it must be noted that
Burger did not cite specific examples, only generalizations.

To the degree that a Public Affairs Officer can grasp
problems, present them with recommended solutions, and
communicate with the Commander in his/her language, the
effectiveness of that PAO and the public affairs program will
rise.

Besides these three studies that deal specifically with
perceptions of public relations/affairs professionals, there
are other research studies that employ methodology that will
be used for this particular study.

In a report on factor analysis in 1977 by James R.
Smith and Roger K. Blashfield, they indicate that researchers
who use factor analysis for the study and interpretation of
data, focus their interest on common variance; that is the
variance of a variable that is correlated with other

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[1]Ibid., p. 30.

[2]Ibid., p. 29.

variables in the data set.[1]   (Methodology will be discussed
in greater detail in Chapter II).

In factor analysis, most media applications center on
the discovery of dimensions in a large set of variables, an R
study, or the assessment of subject similarities in order to
form typologies, a Q study.[2]

An example of an R study was done by J. David Lewis on
the patterns of television programming decision-making. In
that study, Lewis factor analyzed 301 responses to a 45-item
questionnaire and discovered eight primary factors that
influence decision-making.[3]

A Q study approach to factor analysis was done by
Rarick, Townsend and Boyd that focused on the make-up or
attributes of a young television audience. The result of
that study showed clusters of adolescents who share similar
perceptions of real and television police.[4]

In his 1976 thesis for the University of Oklahoma,
Gannon used a 2 x 3 factorial design that allowed for the

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[1]James R. Smith and Roger K. Blashfield, "Reporting
Factor Analysis in Mass Media Research: A Review of
Methods," Journal of Broadcasting Vol. 21, No. 2 (Spring
1977):187.

[2]Ibid., p. 187.

[3]J. David Lewis, "Programmer's Choice: Eight Factors
in Program Decision-Making," Journal of Broadcasting Vol. 14,
No. 1 (Winter 1969-1970):81.

[4]David L. Rarick, James E. Townsend, and Douglas A.
Boyd, "Adolescent Perceptions of Police: Actual and as
Depicted in TV Drama," Journalism Quarterly Vol. 50, No. 3
(Autumn 1973):445.

proper classification of responses and the testing of correlations between specific groups.[1] Further, Gannon used a five-point semantic differential scale that allowed for intensity of attitude expression, greater variance, and allowance for the consideration of findings in view of his hypotheses.[2]

Gannon's study dealt with the perception an Air Force Public Affairs Officer holds toward his or her own job. This study will analyze the perceptions an Air Force Commander holds toward a Public Affairs Officer and the effectiveness of that Public Affairs Officer.

For the purpose of this study, an Air Force Commander is an individual who has the responsibility of command for Air Force units at the Wing, Division, Numbered Air Force, and Major Command levels. A Public Affairs Officer is an individual who holds an Air Force Specialty Code of 7924, 7916, or 7911 and is the Chief or Director of Public Affairs at the Wing, Division, Numbered Air Force, or Major Command level.

A study done by L. Brooks Hill found that Commanders do not trust junior ranking Public Affairs Officers. "Information Officers [since this study was done, Public Affairs Officer is the name of the career field instead of

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[1]Gannon, "Air Force Information Officers' Perceptions of Their Jobs," p. 15.

[2]Ibid., p. 23.

Information Officer] frequently reported that their Commanders and other members of the staff see the IO as incompetent or untrustworthy because of junior rank. Similarly, Commanders often complained about their inexperienced personnel."[1]

Does this perception hold true today as it did in 1978, or do Commanders hold a higher perception of the Public Affairs Officer? To test this concept of perception, the following hypothesis will be used:

H_1: A Commander will perceive a junior-ranking Public Affairs Officer (Second Lieutenant, First Lieutenant, and Captain) less competent and less trustworthy than a senior ranking (Major and above) Public Affairs Officer.

This hypothesis is able to be tested due to the variables involved in perception. For instance, relationships between a Commander and Public Affairs Officer can be tested via several variables: experience levels of a Commander in relation to experience levels of the Public Affairs Officer and rank as a Public Affairs Officer. The above stated hypothesis is designed to test these relationships.

In his study of the Commander's utilization of the Information Officer, Hill discusses some of the consequences

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[1]L. Brooks Hill, "Commander Utilization of the Information Officer," University of Oklahoma, 1978, p. 16.

of the seeming misperceptions Commanders hold concerning the

Public Affairs Officer (then Information Officer):

> The overall significance of the
> different perceptions of the IO's
> experience centers on the self-image and
> job performance of Information Officers.
> Because of their position in the
> organization's power structure a
> negative self-image, whether correctly
> or incorrectly developed, is not easy to
> correct and may lead to a cycle of
> reduced potential. This cycle is set in
> motion when the IOs begin to perceive
> themselves as non-credible. After this
> perception subsequent interactions tend
> to reaffirm, rather than correct, the
> initial negative feeling. This, in
> turn, may lead to an overly cautious,
> cover yourself at all cost,
> defensiveness or, on some occasions, to
> a reassertion of a positive self-image
> from over-identification with civilian
> counterparts. In either case the IO
> begins to be less valuable as an honest
> advisor to the Commander regarding the
> information program.[1]

In addition to testing the validity of these

'perceptions,' three open-ended questions are used in the

survey instrument in an effort to identify the traits a

Commander expects to see in his/her Public Affairs Officer.

The goal of this effort is to better aid and equip a Public

Affairs Officer in his/her professional relationship with a

Commander.

As earlier mentioned, it is assumed that a Commander

with previous command experience will have a higher

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[1]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

'perception' of a Public Affairs Officer than a Commander with no previous command experience. Again, this concept is testable in the form of a hypothesis:

H_2: A Commander with previous command experience will give more support to the Public Affairs Officer than a Commander who has no previous command experience.

In the 1978 study, Hill found that the average Commander had five years of command experience while the Information Officer had an average of nine years of experience in his/her profession.[1] Do these experience levels hold true today? And if so, what relationship does previous command experience have in a Commander's 'perception' of the Public Affairs Officer? Hypothesis number two is designed to test and establish these relationships.

A third area of interest for this study is the promotion possibilities of Public Affairs Officers in relation to other staff officers. "Because Commanders come from operational units, the problem of dissimilar perceptions of responsibilities may be common to staff members who do not direct operational units."[2] It is for this reason that we can assume that Commanders will perceive officers with an operational background as having greater promotion possibilities than a support officer such as the Public

---

[1]Ibid., p. 16.

[2]Ibid., p. 26.

Affairs Officer. Again, this concept is testable in the form
of a hypothesis:

> H_3: An officer with an operational
> background will be perceived by the
> Commander as having a greater promotion
> potential than a Public Affairs Officer.

This research study will add to the field of knowledge
of perceptions and job performance and satisfaction by means
of a new hypothesis. The information cannot only be applied
to the Air Force Public Affairs Officer, but to most any work
situation where a line-staff structure exists.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

In his book, Public Relations and Survey Research,
Edward J. Robinson notes that one of the requirements for
research in the field of communications is to identify the
objectives and methods of the research to be conducted.[1]

Research design will normally fall into one of three
broad categories: Formulative (exploratory) studies,
descriptive studies, and experimental studies (those testing
causal hypotheses).[2] Selltiz defines descriptive survey as
portraying accurately the characteristics of a particular
individual, situation, or group.[3] As such, this research
study is a descriptive study or survey.

The objective of this study is to assess
characteristics or attitudes of a selected group of Air Force

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[1]Edward J. Robinson, Public Relations and Survey Re-
search (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1969), p. 55.

[2]Claire Selltiz et al., Research Methods in Social Re-
lations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966),
p. 50.

[3]Ibid., p. 50.

Commanders at the Wing level or higher. The primary interest of the research is to determine if there are any relationships between an Air Force Commander's perception of a Public Affairs Officer and that Public Affairs Officer's ability to carry out the Air Force Public Affairs program.

Again, operational definitions are a critical need in any explanation of methodology. Definitions are needed in order for the researcher and others to know exactly what has been done in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.[1]

To begin, a shared understanding of survey research is needed. In his book Foundations of Behavioral Research, Fred Kerlinger defines survey research as such:

> Survey research is that branch of social scientific investigation that studies large and small populations (or universes) by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables.[2]

Kerlinger further explains surveys as a "focus on people, the vital facts of people and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivation and behavior.[3] This research study is concerned with the psychological variables of opinions and attitudes.

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[1] Robinson, Public Relations and Survey Research, p. 488.

[2] Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1966), p. 393.

[3] Ibid.

In the context of this research, the term "opinion" will be used as the spoken form of an attitude.[1]   An "attitude" will be defined as "an organized predisposition to think, feel, perceive and behave toward a cognitive object."[2]

The questionnaire portion of this research report is designed to obtain opinions. Then, from these opinions, attitudes of the respondents (Air Force Commanders) toward the Public Affairs Officers can be calculated.

For purposes of this survey research, three assumptions will be held as true:[3]

1. Attitudes are measurable and vary along a linear continuum.[4]

2. The attitudes of a selected group of Air Force Commanders can be measured by a questionnaire designed for that purpose.

3. The opinions expressed by the Air Force Commanders will be reflective of their attitudes and representative of the universe.

The next step in the research process is to determine a sample population of Air Force Commanders to be surveyed.

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Gannon, "Air Force Information Officers' Perceptions of Their Jobs," p. 14. Though Gannon was exploring the perceptions a Public Affairs Officer holds toward his/her own job, with slight modification, these assumptions can be held as true to this research study.

[4]Jim Nunnally, Tests and Measurements (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 301.

Not all Air Force Commanders need to be surveyed, according to Claire Selltiz.

> It is rarely necessary to study all the
> people of a community in order to
> provide an accurate and reliable
> description of the attitudes and
> opinions of its members. More often
> than not, a sample of the population to
> be studied is sufficient.[1]

Selltiz goes on to stipulate that the sample must be designed in such a way that it will represent the population that is the object of the study.[2]

According to Charles Backstrom and Gerald Hursh, there are two requirements that a survey must meet. First, "the sample must include people who together are representative of the population...and the sample must be adequate in size so estimates about the characteristics of the population can be made."[3]

In studying Air Force Commanders at the Wing level, it will be assumed that they are a relatively homogeneous group. Their military backgrounds allow for this assumption. It takes fewer people to produce a good sample derived from a homogeneous population than it does from a heterogeneous

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[1]Selltiz, Research Methods in Social Relations, p. 51.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Charles Backstrom and Gerald D. Hursh, Survey Research (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1963), p. 25.

sample.[1]   In order to project findings, accuracy and precision of the research instrument are important.   A researcher must state in advance the degree of confidence and amount of error that can be tolerated in the survey.[2]

Backstrom and Hursh say that precision can be termed adequate if an inference can be made to the population from the results of the survey.   The sampling only allows an estimate of the population under study, not a true determination.[3]

According to H. H. Remmers, the difference between the sample estimate and the true characteristic that would have been found if the entire population were surveyed is called sampling error.[4]   In order to establish this sampling error, Remmers says that a researcher must first set up a hypothetical percentage value he/she feels is a true percentage of the population character.[5]

For this study, it will be assumed that if all Air Force Commanders were surveyed, 80 per cent of them will possess a favorable attitude toward Public Affairs Officers while 20 per cent will have unfavorable attitudes. Having

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[1]Ibid., p. 26.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]H. H. Remmers, Introduction to Opinion and Attitude Measurement (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 38.

[5]Ibid., p. 38.

determined this hypothetical percentage value, it is then possible to compute the required sample size.

The formula used to compute the sample size is:

$$NS = \frac{P(100-P)C^2}{E^2}$$

where NS represents the needed or required sample; P represents the potential split in population; E represents the permissible error rate; and C represents the confidence level.

If the tolerated error selected is ±5 percent at the .95 degree of confidence (or 1.96 standard deviation[1]), the sample size will be calculated as follows:

$$NS = \frac{80(100-80)3^2}{5^2} \qquad \text{or } NS = \frac{80(20)9}{25} \qquad \text{or}$$

$$NS = \frac{14400}{25} = 576$$

Therefore, within the parameters of this formula, it can be assumed that with 95 per cent of confidence that the results from the sample of Air Force Commanders would not deviate more than ± 5 percentage points from the true percentage of the population's attitude.

After the tolerated error, degree of confidence and sample size have been determined, the next procedure is to

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[1]Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominick, Mass Media Research (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1983), p. 174.

determine the actual selection of the sample subjects. One of the most accepted methods of assuring chance selection is random sampling. Robinson defines a random sample as selecting "in such a fashion that each element, or observation has either an equal or specifiable opportunity to be selected."[1] Robinson also says that if a sample is drawn by a random method, then generalizations can be made about the population in total.[2]

Kerlinger also supports the use of random sample:

> When a sample of a population has been drawn at random, it is possible to make statements about the characteristics or other relations between characteristics in the population.[3]

Since random sampling is a valid representation of the population, this method will be used to select respondents.

After respondents have been selected, the next procedure will be the development of a survey instrument that can be used to obtain opinions and then measure attitudes of the subjects toward their perceptions of the Public Affairs Officer and the Public Affairs program. A mail questionnaire will be used. Wimmer and Dominick discuss the advantages of the use of a mail questionnaire:

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[1] Robinson, Public Relations and Survey Research, p. 159.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research, p. 60.

> Mail surveys cover a wide geographic
> area for a rather reasonable cost. They
> are often the only way to gather
> information from people who live in
> hard-to-reach areas of the country (or
> in other countries)...if researchers
> need to collect information from a
> highly specialized audience, then the
> mail technique can be quite attractive.
> Another advantage of the mail survey is
> that it provides anonymity, so that
> subjects are more likely to provide
> candid answers to sensitive
> questions...probably the biggest
> advantage of this method, however, is
> its relatvie low cost.[1]

The questionnaire will consist of two parts. The first part will be designed to gather basic demographic data: rank of respondent, current command level, previous command experience if any, rank of the Director of Public Affairs, and the number of Public Affairs Officers on the Commander's staff.

Part Two of the questionnaire will consist of 26 questions. The first 23 opinion-type questions will be structured. In other words, the respondent will only be able to respond to a fixed alternative. The last three questions of Part Two will be open-ended and will allow the respondent to provide additional comments about Air Force Public Affairs Officers and the Air Force Public Affairs Program.

It is the first 23 questions of this second part that will deal directly with a respondent's attitudes concerning

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[1]Wimmer and Dominick, _Mass Media Research_, pp. 125-126.

the Air Force Public Affairs Officer. A major problem here is to insure that the questions asked will elicit appropriate attitudinal variations and will allow for measurement of the intensity of those attitudes.

One alternative or variation to the structured question is the summated rating. By using the summated rating, the respondent is presented a statement and is asked to indicate to what extent the word, phrase, or statement is descriptive of his beliefs such as:

Strongly Agree ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ Strongly Disagree

This study will incorporate a summated rating scale that allows for measuring the meaning an item has for an individual.[1] A five-point rating scale will be used as such scales allow for intensity of attitude expression, resulting in greater variance, and it will also allow for the consideration of the findings in view of the hypotheses.[2] The five-point ratings and numerical values () assigned are: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), No Opinion (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Kerlinger goes on to discuss the ease of using a semantic differential type scale. "This scale seems to be the most useful in behavioral research. It is easier to develop and yields about the same results as the

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[1]Ibid., p. 26.

[2]Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research, p. 496.

more laboriously constructed, equal appearing interval scale."[1]

In order to test for validity and reliability in the survey instrument, a trial questionnaire will be used with a small group of Commanders prior to the actual survey. This will be followed by an interview with each of the sample respondents to gain their perception of the questions and the wording of the statements.

The questionnaires will all be mailed at the same time. The first mailing will include a cover letter personally signed by me and will explain the purpose of the survey and a statement that it has been approved by Air Force authorities. It will also assure the respondents that their replies will be held in strict confidence and will also solicit their prompt response. The first mailing will include the questionnaire and an addressed, stamped return envelope. The questionnaire will be coded to allow for determination as to who had not responded. This will allow for follow-up mailings, if needed.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Gannon, in his thesis submitted to the graduate faculty at the University of Oklahoma, discussed the importance of the analysis of raw research data. "The analysis of the data gathered is an important factor in any research. It is

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[1]Ibid., p. 499.

necessary to break down the technical jargon and statistical languages of the raw form into understandable and interpretable form for study and testing."[1]

Kerlinger defines analysis as the categorizing, manipulating, and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research questions.[2]

"The three ordinary steps of factor analysis are (1) the preparation of the correlation matrix, (2) the extraction of the initial factors--the exploration of possible data reduction, and (3) the rotation to a terminal solution--the search for simple and interpretable factors.[3]

These three steps are summarized as follows:[4]

Steps in Factor Analysis   Major Options

1. Preparation of Correlation Matrix	(a) correlation between variables (b) correlation between units
2. Extraction of Initial Factors	(a) defined factors (b) inferred factors
3. Rotation to Terminal Factors	(a) uncorrelated factors (b) correlated factors

For this study, our universe (Commanders), can be broken down by Commanders with previous command experience and Commanders with no previous command experience. Further, Commanders can be placed in sub-cells by age, current command

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[1]Gannon, "Air Force Information Officers' Perceptions of Their Jobs," p. 24.

[2]Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research, p. 134.

[3]Ibid., p. 473.

[4]Norman H. Nie et al., Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), p. 469.

level, and military rank to test whether any combination of these variables has an effect on perceptions of Public Affairs Officers.

After categorizing the universe, the analysis of data will be performed. Our next step, then, is to select the statistical analysis or test that will be best for our data. The test will need to measure any correlation between groupings or cells as well as be able to determine if there are any basic factors that distinguish our universe.

As alluded to in the opening paragraphs of this section, factor analysis is one way to array the data in such a way that makes the groupings readily and easily identifiable. "Factor analysis is a term for a variety of statistical procedures developed for the purpose of analyzing the intercorrelations within a set of variables. These relationships are represented by weighted linear combinations known as factor scores which are used in the development of constructs and theories."[1]

Factor analysis is deemed the best method of analysis for this research project for several reasons. First, factor analysis combines many statistical tests into one overall test. Rather than having to run several different tests on the data, such as correlation, factor analysis will perform these statistical analyses within the program.

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[1]Wimmer and Dominick, _Mass Media Research_, p. 233.

Second, factor analysis allows for rather easy interpretation. As an example, factor analysis allows for the clustering of variables whether or not a given variable was loaded on a particular factor.[1]

And third, factor analysis allows for the factors to be broken down into as many groups as necessary to cover all possibilities rather than leaving some variables as questionable. One technique of doing this is the R-technique that factors a set of variables collected at the same time from a number of individuals.[2]

In addition, "factor analysis is appropriate in any phase of research, from pilot studies to theory development. This is not true of other multivariate statistical procedures."[3]

And finally, factor analysis allows for the search of order among many variables such as the number of variables under study in this project. "Factor analysis allows for the identification from a large group of variables of a smaller number of composite variables that help order and define the phenomenon under study."[4]

The construct "perception by the Commander of the Public Affairs Officer" may be defined by a large number of

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[1]Ibid., p. 249.

[2]Ibid., p. 234.

[3]Ibid., p. 234.

[4]Ibid., pp. 238-239.

variables. However, "it may be difficult, if not impossible, to intuitively determine which variables contribute significantly to the construct. Factor analysis, by reducing the number of variables, makes it easier to identify patterns and underlying structures."[1]

The next task is to select a program that will run an analysis of the data. The <u>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</u> (SPSS) will be used for the computer analysis.

> SPSS is an integrated system of computer programs designed for the analysis of social science data. The system provides a unified and comprehensive package that enables the user to perform many different types of data analysis in a simple and convenient manner. SPSS allows a great deal of flexibility in *the format of data. It provides the* user with a comprehensive set of procedures for data transformation and file manipulation, and it offers the researcher a large number of statistical routines commonly used in the social sciences. In addition to the usual descriptive statistics...SPSS contains procedures for...factor analysis.[2]

For this reason, the SPSS program of The University of Oklahoma Computer Center will be used.

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[1]Ibid., p. 239.

[2]Nie et al., <u>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</u>, p. 1.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

A total of 115 questionnaires were mailed to commanders. Ninety-two surveys were returned by the July 2nd deadline for a return percentage of 80%. All surveys returned were usable for the study.

Following the return of the questionnaires, the raw data gathered was subjected to three forms of analysis: simple frequency distribution, cross-tabulations, and factor analysis. Information was gathered on how each individual answered the questions and how the answers compared or factored (to be discussed in detail later in Chapter III) to the answers of the other respondents.

Demographic analysis is contained in the following five tables. This data was interpreted using the frequency run available through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences:

TABLE 1

PRESENT RANK OF COMMANDER

RANK	PER-CENT OF RESPONDENTS
Colonel	94.9
Other	5.1

TABLE 2

PRESENT RANK OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

RANK	PERCENT
Second Lieutenant	2.6
First Lieutenant	7.7
Captain	56.4
Major	23.1
Lieutenant Colonel	10.3

It should be noted that throughout the Air Force, Second and First Lieutenants comprise 32.8 percent of all Public Affairs Officers, Captains comprise 29.7 percent of all Public Affairs Officers, Majors comprise 20.8 percent of all Public Affairs Officers, and Lieutenant Colonels comprise 16.5 percent of all Public Affairs Officers. As this study pertains primarily to the wing level Commander and his/her staff, figures cited in Table II will not necessarily reflect Air Force percentages cited above. In addition, only the Chief or Director of Public Affairs was included in the survey and not the entire Public Affairs Officer staff. This would account for only 10.3 percent of Public Affairs Officers in Table II being either Second or First Lieutenants as compared to 32.8 percent of all Public Affairs Officers in the Air Force.

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS ON
COMMANDER'S PA STAFF

Number of Officers	Per Cent
1-2	87.1
3-5	10.3
6+	2.6

TABLE 4

PRESENT COMMAND LEVEL OF COMMANDER

Command Level	Per Cent of Respondents
Group	10.3
Wing	79.5
Other	10.2

TABLᴱ 5

PREVIOUS COMMAND EXPERIENCE OF COMMANDER

Previous Command Experience of Commander	Per Cent of Respondents
Yes	89.7
No	10.3

The previous command experience includes the command of a
squadron, group, or wing.

Before the results of the factoring are discussed, a
breakdown of how the Commanders responded to each item in the
questionnaire is provided the reader as an easy synopsis of
the data. The entire questionnaire is provided at Appendix
A, page 59.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. The success of my command policies depend largely on the Public Affairs program........	2.6%	20.5%	10.3%	53.8%	12.8%
2. My Public Affairs staff keeps the personnel under my command well informed of command interest items.		7.7%		79.5%	12.8%
3. I support the Public Affairs program.				23.1%	76.9%
4. My Public Affairs staff keeps the local community well informed of Air Force initiatives in our geographic area.		5.1%	5.1%	48.7%	41.0%
5. Our Public Affairs program places too much emphasis on gaining favorable public opinion for our activities.....	23.1%	66.7%	5.1%	2.6%	2.6%
6. The Air Force is well accepted by the local community	2.6%		2.6%	35.9%	59.0%

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
7. The Public Affairs program has a major role in the acceptance of Air Force initiatives in my command.....	2.6%	5.1%	17.9%	53.8%	20.5%
8. My Public Affairs officers have as good a chance for promotion as other members of my staff..........	2.6%	10.3%		66.7%	20.5%
9. I accept my Public Affairs officer's advice on matters pertaining to public affairs.	2.6%	5.1%	2.6%	69.2%	20.5%
10. Keeping members of my command informed is the most important aspect of my public affairs staff..	5.1%	33.3%	2.6%	35.9%	23.1%
11. The effectiveness of my Public Affairs officer depends on formal education and training...	28.2%		10.3%	48.7%	12.8%

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
12. Gaining community acceptance of Air Force activities in my command is the most important aspect of my public affairs staff..........	7.7%	46.2%	5.1%	38.5%	2.6%
13. My Public Affairs officer fully supports my command interest initiatives....		2.6%	5.1%	56.4%	35.9%
14. Working with members of the media is the most important aspect of my public affairs staff..	2.6%	51.3%	7.7%	28.2%	10.3%
15. I urge my public affairs staff to be involved with civic organizations..		5.1%	2.6%	66.7%	25.6%
16. The Air Force releases too much negative information concerning our activities.....	12.8%	71.8%	7.7%	5.1%	2.6%
17. I give speeches at community sites/ events........				74.4%	25.6%
18. Public Affairs is a needed function for the Air Force and my command.......				38.5%	61.5%

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
19. My Public Affairs officer is as pro-fessional and knowledgeable in his/her job as other staff members are in their jobs.....	2.6%	5.1%	2.6%	38.5%	51.3%
20. My Public Affairs officer provides pro-fessional advice on public affairs matters........		5.1%		69.2%	25.6%
21. I consult my Public Affairs officer on aspects of my command that may impact on the community......		5.1%	2.6%	64.1%	28.2%
22. I urge staff members to consult the Public Affairs officer on initia-tives in their area that may impact the community or command population		2.6%		59.0%	35.9%

The blanks in the above data indicate no responses were given for that particular item.

As the above frequency data shows, for the most part Public Affairs Officers are doing a good job for their Commander. The data also shows that the Commander accepts the Public Affairs program and thinks it is a needed function for the Air Force. One-hundred percent of the Commanders

said they support the Public Affairs program as well as a 100
percent response rate by the Commanders who think Public
Affairs is a needed function for their command and the Air
Force.

The Commanders also accept the advice of their Public
Affairs Officer. Almost 90 percent of the Commanders said
they Agree or Strongly Agree to the statement "I accept my
Public Affairs Officer's advice on matters pertaining to
public affairs." This high percentage of positive response
may be attributed to the professionalism of Air Force Public
Affairs Officers. Again, nearly 90 percent of Commanders
responded with a positive answer (Agree or Strongly Agree) to
the statement "My Public Affairs Officer is as professional
and knowledgeable in his/her job as other staff members are
in their jobs." In addition, over 95 percent of the
Commanders responded with a positive answer (Agree or
Strongly Agree) to the statement "My Public Affairs Officer
provides professional advice on public affairs matters,"
another indication of a strong Public Affairs program.

As far as the Public Affairs job is concerned, it seems
that Commanders think Internal Information is the most
important aspect of the Public Affairs staff. Nearly 60
percent of the Commanders responded with a positive answer
(Agree or Strongly Agree) to the statement, "Keeping members
of my command informed is the most important aspect of my
public affairs staff." This was supported when over 92

percent of the Commanders reported a positive response (Agree or Strongly Agree) to the statement, "My Public Affairs Officer fully supports my command interest initiatives."

Community Relations seemed to be the second most important aspect of public affairs on the Commander's agenda with just over 41 percent of the Commanders reporting a positive response (Agree or Strongly Agree). However, even though Community Relations was second in importance (behind Internal Information) for the Commanders, over 92 percent of the Commanders urge their Public Affairs Officers to become involved in civic activities and organizations. The Commanders themselves think getting involved in local events is important as 100 percent of the Commanders report giving speeches at local sites/events and only 38.5 percent of the Commanders reported that working with the media is the most important aspect of the public affairs staff.

In Major (then Captain) Gannon's 1976 thesis, he found that Public Affairs Officers thought the career field was not a good field for promotions. The statement in Gannon's thesis, "Information Officer has equal promotion chance with B-52 pilot," factored next to last in a Q-Factor Analysis with a Z-Score of -1.65.[1] In addition, the statement,

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[1]Gannon, "Air Force Information Officers' Perceptions of Their Jobs," p. 35.

"Information field is good for promotion," factored last in the Q-Factor Analysis with a Z-Score of -1.68.[1]

But in this study, just over 87 percent of the Commanders either Agree or Strongly Agree to the statement that "My Public Affairs Officers have as good a chance for promotion as other members of my staff." On the converse of the promotion question, 12.9 percent of the Commanders either Disagree or Strongly Disagree to the statement. Specific factorings and Z-Scores will be discussed later in this chapter.

The above synopsis was provided as a quick look at the data. The following tables report cross-tabulations of the data in an effort to support or refute the three hypotheses stated in Chapter I. The cross-tabulation program of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences provides a more in-depth look at relationships between variables in the questionnaire than does the Frequency Distribution program. The data is presented in table form followed by a narrative description.

The first hypothesis proposed for this study was:

H_1: A Commander will perceive a junior-ranking Public Affairs Officer (Second Lieutenant, First Lieutenant, and Captain) less competent and trustworthy than a senior ranking (Major and above) Public Affairs Officer.

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[1]Ibid., p. 35.

The following data is presented as a partial basis to formulate a conclusion to Hypothesis 1:

TABLE 6

RANK OF PA COMPARED TO PROFESSIONALISM OF PA

PA Professionalism (Question 24)

Rank of PA (Question 2)	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Second Lt.				100%	
First Lt.			33.3%		66.7%
Captain	4.5%	4.5%		45.5%	45.5%
Major				33.3%	66.7%
Lt. Colonel		25.0%		25.0%	50.0%

This table, though not conclusively, tends to support the notion that the higher rank a Public Affairs Officer attains, the more professional that Public Affairs Officer is perceived by the Commander. As an example, 100 percent of the Commanders either Agree or Strongly Agree that their Public Affairs Officer who is a Major is as professional as other members of the Commander's staff. In contrast, Commanders who have a Lieutenant Colonel as a PA, Disagree 25 percent of the time that the PA is as professional as other members of the Commander's staff.

TABLE 7

RANK OF PA COMPARED TO PROFESSIONAL ADVICE
PROVIDED TO COMMANDER

	Professional Advice Provided (Question 25)				
Rank (Question 2)	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Second Lt.				100%	
First Lt.				66.7%	33.3%
Captain		4.5%		81.8%	13.6%
Major				55.6%	44.4%
Lt. Colonel		25%		25%	50%

The data presented in the above table refutes Hypothesis 1. Our hypothesis said that a Commander would perceive a higher ranking Public Affairs Officer as more professional than a junior ranking Public Affairs Officer. Though 100 percent of Commanders who have a Major as a Public Affairs Officer Agree or Strongly Agree that their PA provides professional advice, over 95 percent of Commanders with Captains as the PA also report a positive (Agree or Strongly Agree) response to their PA's ability to give professional advice. As can also be seen 25 percent of the Commanders who have a Lieutenant Colonel assigned as their PA Disagree that the PA provides professional advice. And in direct contrast of the hypothesis, Commanders who have either a Second or First Lieutenant assigned as their PA report a 100 percent positive response (Agree or Strongly Agree) to that PA's ability to provide professional advice to the Commander.

Thus, Tables 6 and 7 seem to refute Hypothesis 1.

The second hypothesis is:

H_2: A Commander with previous command experience will give more support to the Public Affairs Officer than a Commander who has no previous command experience.

The following data are presented as a partial basis to formulate a conclusion to Hypothesis 2:

TABLE 8

Commander Supports PA Program (Question 8)

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Previous Command Experience (Question 5)					
Yes				20%	80%
No				50%	50%

The data from this table supports the hypothesis. Commanders with previous command experience strongly support the Public Affairs program while Commanders with no previous command experience are split between Agree and Strongly Agree. Again, these findings are in direct contrast to Major Gannon's 1976 study of the Information Officer. Gannon's statement, "Air Force Information program enjoys strong support from Commanders," was factored with a -1.08 Z-Score by the Information Officer.[1] The above data indicate that

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[1]Ibid., p. 34.

the Public Affairs program enjoys overwhelming support from the Commanders.

TABLE 9

PREVIOUS COMMAND EXPERIENCE COMPARED
WITH PROFESSIONALISM OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

	Professionalism of PA (Question 24)				
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Previous Command Experience (Question 5)					
Yes	2.9%	5.7%	2.9%	34.3%	54.3%
No				75.0%	25.0%

Again, the data refutes the hypothesis. A full 100 percent of the Commanders with no previous command experience report that their Public Affairs Officers are as professional in the career field as other staff officers are in their career field. Almost 89 percent of Commanders with previous command experience also report their Public Affairs Officer as professional as other staff members.

TABLE 10

PREVIOUS COMMAND EXPERIENCE COMPARED
TO PROFESSIONAL ADVICE PROVIDED BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

	PA Provide Professional Advice (Question 25)				
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Previous Command Experience (Question 5)					
Yes		5.7%		68.6%	25.7%
No				75.0%	25.0%

Again, the data suggest that Air Force Public Affairs Officers are doing an exceptional job for their Commander. And again, the data refutes the hypothesis. The Commanders with no previous command experience again report a very positive response to their Public Affairs Officer's ability to provide professional advice. And 94.3 percent of the Commanders with previous command experience Agree or Strongly Agree that their Public Affairs Officers provide professional advice.

The data presented in Tables 8, 9, and 10 seem to refute Hypothesis 2.

The third hypothesis for testing is:

H_3: An officer with an operational background will be perceived by the Commander as having a greater promotion potential than a Public Affairs Officer.

The following data is presented as a partial basis to formulate a conclusion to Hypothesis 2:

TABLE 11

PRESENT RANK OF COMMANDER COMPARED TO
PROMOTION POTENTIAL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

| | Promotion Potential of PA (Question 13) | | | | |
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Rank of Commander (Question 1)					
Colonel	2.7%	10.8%		64.9%	21.6%
Other				100%	

Commanders support the notion that their Public Affairs Officer has as good a chance at promotion as do other members of the staff whether the other officers have operational backgrounds or not. Over 86 percent of the Colonels Agree or Strongly Agree that their Public Affairs Officer has as good a chance at promotion as do other officers on the Commander's staff.

TABLE 12

PRESENT LEVEL OF COMMAND COMPARED
TO PROMOTION POTENTIAL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

	Promotion Potential of PA (Question 13)				
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Present Command Level (Question 4)					
Group		25%		75%	
Wing	3.2%	9.7%		61.3%	25.8%
Other				100%	

The data again refutes Hypothesis #3. Over 87 percent of Wing Commanders Agree or Strongly Agree that their Public Affairs Officer has as good a chance at promotion as do other officers of the Commander's staff. The split is more dramatic at the Air Base Group level; however, 75 percent of Group Commanders Agree that their Public Affairs Officer has as good a chance at promotion as do other officers of the Commander's staff.

TABLE 13

PREVIOUS COMMAND EXPERIENCE COMPARED TO
PROMOTION POTENTIAL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

	Promotion Potential of PA (Question 13)				
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Previous Command Experience (Question 5)					
Yes	2.9%	11.4%		62.9%	22.9%
No				100%	

Commanders with no previous command experience again give overwhelming support to their Public Affairs Officer: 100 percent Agree that their PA has as good a chance for promotion as do other officers of their staff. Commanders with previous command experience Agree or Strongly Agree over 85 percent that their Public Affairs Officer has as good a chance at promotion as do other officers on the Commander's staff.

The data presented in Tables 11, 12, and 13 seem to refute Hypothesis 3.

In addition to the cross-tabulation program, the questionnaire was factor analyzed across all respondents. This provided a clustering of statements on the basis of similarities and differences in the way the subjects responded to them. The results of this analysis are shown in the following table:

TABLE 14

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Factor	Percentage of Variance	Adjusted Cumulative Percentage
6	53.5	53.5
7	10.3	63.8
8	6.9	70.6
9	5.8	76.4
10	4.8	81.2
11	4.5	85.6
12	3.4	89.0
13	3.0	92.0
14	2.1	94.1
15	1.7	95.8
16	1.2	96.9
17	1.0	97.9
18	.8	98.7
19	.4	99.1
20	.3	99.4
21	.3	99.7
22	.1	99.8
23	.1	99.9
24	.1	100.0
25	.0	100.0
26	.0	100.0
27	-.0	100.0

Factors started with Factor #6 as the first five variables (factors) were demographic data and were not included in the analysis.

In order to determine how subjects clustered on the basis of the attitudes revealed by their responses to the questionnaire statements, a Q-analysis was run. Here, subjects are clustered across statements on the basis of their similarities and differences of attitudes held.

Briefly, respondents split into two factors or groups. With the exception of two or three responses, the differences

between the two groups are not great as respondents in both groups shared some characteristics of each group.

The first group of Commanders is by far the largest, accounting for 72.6 percent of the respondents. These individuals show the most positive attitude toward Public Affairs Officers and the Public Affairs career field.

This group is characterized by a predominance of positive responses to questionnaire statements indicating a high regard for the Public Affairs career field and the job of the Public Affairs Officer. The following table shows descending array of Z-Scores and item descriptions for these individuals.

TABLE 15

DESCENDING ARRAY OF Z-SCORES AND
ITEM DESCRIPTIONS FOR GROUP 1

	ITEM DESCRIPTION	Z-SCORE
	AGREE MOST	
20.	My PA provides professional advice.	1.95
18.	PA is a needed function for the Air Force and my command.	1.80
9.	I accept my PA's advice.	1.79
19.	My PA is as professional in his/her field as others are in theirs.	1.75
1.	Success of my command policies depend on PA program.	1.73
4.	My PA staff keeps community well informed of Air Force initiatives.	1.70
5.	Our PA program places too much emphasis on gaining favorable public opinion.	1.70
10.	Internal Information most important aspect of PA.	1.69
15.	I urge PA staff to get involved with local community.	1.67
22.	I urge other staff members to consult PA.	1.66
7.	The PA program has a major role in the acceptance of the Air Force.	1.60
14.	Media Relations most important aspect of PA.	1.57

AGREE MOST	Z-SCORE
8. PA promotion potential.	1.51
11. PA effectiveness depends on formal education and training.	1.40

AGREE LEAST	
16. The Air Force releases too much negative information.	-1.10
12. Gaining community acceptance of Air Force initiatives most important aspect of PA.	-1.10

The second grouping shows a high response to those questions dealing with Community Relations as the most important aspect of Public Affairs. However, based on the negative Z-Scores of respondents in Group 2, it appears that the Commanders think their Public Affairs Officer is not doing as good a job as possible in the Community Relations area.

TABLE 16

DESCENDING ARRAY OF Z-SCORES AND
ITEM DESCRIPTIONS FOR GROUP 2

ITEM DESCRIPTION	Z-SCORE
AGREE MOST	
17. I give speeches at community sites/events.	1.88
6. The Air Force is well accepted by local community.	1.69
13. My PA supports my initiatives.	1.67
16. The Air Force releases too much negative information.	1.66
12. Gaining community acceptance is most important aspect of PA.	1.58
2. My PA staff keeps people in my command well informed.	1.53
AGREE LEAST	
4. My PA staff keeps local community well informed.	-1.22
20. My PA provides professional advice.	-1.08
21. I consult my PA on matters that might impact on community.	-1.03

Another area of this study dealt with three open-ended questions. The first was, "The attributes I most desire in a Public Affairs Officer are..."

The number one response to this open-ended question was loyalty. Other attributes cited by Commanders that a PA should have include job knowledge, hardworking, aggressive, common sense, integrity, total willingness to work and accept responsibility, excellent communication ability, and being a team player.

The following two comments pretty well sum up what attributes a Commander desires in a Public Affairs Officer:

> "The PAO should be a team player who takes direction and runs an aggressive program which supports base, Air Force, and community efforts."

> "PA folks need to build credibility with the wing Commander first and foremost so he/she trusts the local PA. If that bond is not built, the wing Commander will tune out the PA--to everyone's detriment."

The second open-ended question was, "The quickest way a Public Affairs Officer can lose my support is. . ."

Quite simply, most Commanders said doing or being the opposite of what they look for in a PA will lose a Commander's support. In addition, Commanders said that telling lies to the media or the Commander will lose the Commander's support.

The third open-ended question was, "Comments you feel are important for the Public Affairs community to know or understand to enhance relations with Commanders..."

Most Commanders elaborated on answers already given. Following are samples:

"Talk to the boss--ask what his public affairs concerns are."
"Always keep the Commander informed."
"Never forget the team concept."
"The PA should be proactive, not reactive."
"Tell it like it is."
"If in doubt, ask me. Don't strike out on your own."
"Coordinate before releasing information."
"Be available."
"Know MAJCOM and Air Force policy."
"Make sure each base has a qualified PA assigned."
"A Commander has multiple responsibilities and needs full support from his PA folks. A PAO who fights guidance, has a better way or ignores direction will soon find himself/herself outside looking in."
"PA must know the Commander's basic philosophy."
"The PA is an Air Force officer first and then a public affairs specialist."
"The PA is not a member of the Fourth Estate."
"The PAO's first and foremost responsibility is to be responsible and helpful to and anticipate the needs of the Commander."

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study attempted to gather empirical evidence concerning the relationship between an Air Force Commander and an Air Force Public Affairs Officer based on the rank of the PA, prior command experience of the Commander, and the promotion potential of a Public Affairs Officer. The following discussion sets forth the findings based on the data.

FINDINGS

The first hypothesis proposed for this study was, "A Commander will perceive a junior-ranking Public Affairs Officer (Second Lieutenant, First Lieutenant, and Captain) less competent and less trustworthy than a senior ranking (Major and above) Public Affairs Officer." The data does not indicate any support for this hypothesis. As a whole, respondents with a Second Lieutenant as a PA agreed that their PA was as professional as other staff members. Almost 67 percent of Commanders with First Lieutenants Strongly Agreed to the same question while 33 percent gave No Opinion. Ninety per-cent of Commanders with a Captain for a PA either Agreed or Strongly Agreed to the professionalism of their PA while 9% either Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed to the same

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question. Commanders with a Major as a PA said their PA was as professional as other staff members. All Commanders either Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement of professionalism. However, Commanders with a Lieutenant Colonel for a PA Disagree with the statement 25 percent of the time but Agree 25 percent and Strongly Agree 50 percent. Based on the data, Hypothesis #1 cannot be conclusively proved and must therefore be rejected. For specific finding of Hypothesis #1, see Tables 6 and 7.

Hypothesis #2 stated "A Commander with previous command experience will give more support to the Public Affairs Officer than a Commander who has no previous command experience." The data presented in Tables 8, 9, and 10 refutes Hypothesis #2. One-hundred percent of Commanders with no previous command experience Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement, "My Public Affairs Officer is as professional and knowledgeable in his/her job as other staff members are in their jobs." Conversely, 89 percent of Commanders with previous command experience Agree or Strongly Agree to the same statement. If anything, it may be that the null hypothesis is true: A Commander without previous command experience will support the Public Affairs program more than a Commander with previous command experience. Again, based on the data presented, Hypothesis #2 cannot be conclusively proved and must therefore be rejected.

Hypothesis #3 stated, "An officer with an operational background will be perceived by the Commander as having a greater promotion potential than a Public Affairs Officer." Again, the data does not support this hypothesis. Across all respondents 87.2 percent Agree or Strongly Agree that the PA has as good a chance for promotion as other staff members. When broken down, Commanders who hold the rank of Colonel Agree or Strongly Agree over 86 percent that their PA has as good promotion potential as do other staff members. And Commanders holding rank other than Colonel Agree 100 percent. Again, the data does not support Hypothesis #3 and must be rejected. For specific findings of Hypothesis #3, see Tables 11, 12, and 13.

Findings also show that Commanders can be placed in two groups. The first group is characterized by their acceptance of the PA and the PA's advice. In addition, Commanders in Group 1 think Internal Information is the most important aspect of the Public Affairs program. Media Relations is also ranked high by Group 1 Commanders while the Community Relations program is ranked negatively.

Conversely, Commanders in Group 2 appear to think that Community Relations is the most important aspect of Public Affairs. However, these Commanders apparently do not think of their PA as doing a good job in Community Relations as they Agree Least to the statement, "My Public Affairs staff keeps the local community well informed of Air Force

initiatives within my command." However, Commanders who fall in Group 2 account for only 27 percent of total respondents.

SUGGESTED FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has hopefully served as a focal point for additional research into the vast area of working relationships between Commanders and Public Affairs Officers and the effectiveness of the Commander's PA program. This study has rejected three hypotheses relating to Commanders and the Public Affairs program. This will at least aid future researchers who approach line-staff relationships. However, one area within this study needs additional research before the hypothesis can be totally rejected. The area of promotion potential needs additional research. I recommend that the promotion potential of all members of the Commander's staff be studied. The staff members could be rank ordered and analyzed in that fashion. This type of study would give us better insight to the PA's promotion potential as compared to other staff members (Logistics, Intelligence, Operations, Surgeon, Services, Chaplain, Personnel, etc.) both rated and non-rated.

In addition, this study found that Internal Information is considered by Commanders as the most important aspect of Public Affairs followed by Media Relations and Community Relations. Comments by Commanders in the open-ended section of the questionnaire (Questions 23, 24, and 25) tend to support this notion. Comments included:

"The PA must have the ability to communicate with me and the base population."
"The PA must have the initiative to identify and publish or broadcast the information that has the greatest impact on the wing and the base."

"The PA should have the capability to determine wing priorities and get that information to the base population."
"The PA must have a very close relationship with unit Commanders and First Sergeants. They must be able to sniff out stories and produce a lively, interesting base paper."
"The PA must be involved in all matters effecting the base."
"Base newspapers are extremely valuable tools for a Commander. If the local PA does not put his best people on that aspect of the job, he is failing the Commander."

Even though Internal Information is considered the most important aspect of Public Affairs by Commanders, they do recognize the importance of Media and Community Relations. The following comments serve as a representative sample:

"Call the local press on local incidences in order to build credibility--result will be to gain support when we need time to formulate a reply."
"PA should have the ability to work with civic leaders and the media."
"Get to know civic leaders and members of the media."
"PA staffers are the key link and interface with the outside world."

As far as additional research is concerned, it would be interesting to know if Commanders think Internal Information is most important at an overseas installation. Do overseas commands such as United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) or Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) place more emphasis on Internal Information than do stateside commands? This information would be an extreme asset to a PA being assigned to USAFE or PACAF.
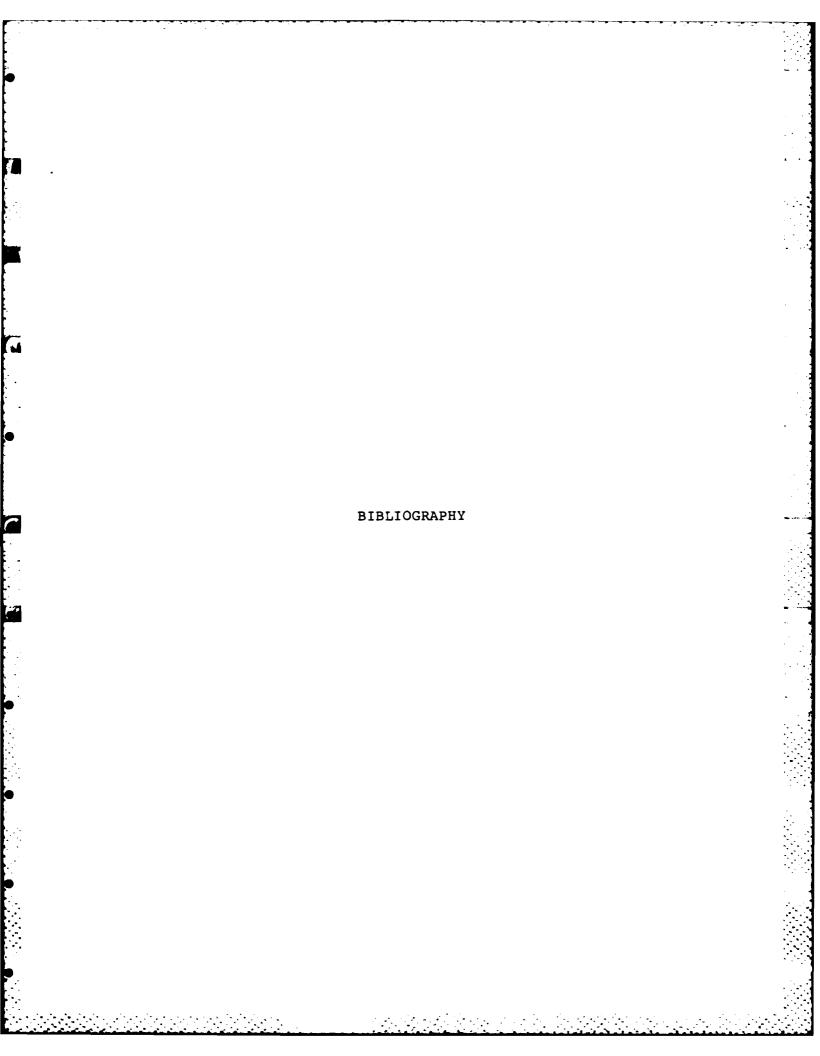
Thus, I feel the following areas of study are important follow-on studies that can gain additional insights into the relationships between Commanders and Public Affairs Officers:

(1) Based on the specific attributes a Commander desires of a PA, which ones will best aid a PA in his/her relationship with the Commander?

(2) Of the three major areas of Public Affairs (Internal Information, Media Relations, and Community Relations), is one more important to a specific Air Force Major Command and why?

(3) What is the Public Affairs Officer's promotion potential compared to other members of the Commander's staff?

(4) As this data may change over a period of time, a replication of this study may be warranted periodically.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

A close observation of the data indicates that almost all Commanders have a high opinion of their Public Affairs Officer and the Public Affairs program. The few negative responses can aid a Public Affairs Officer in future relations with Commanders.

Quite a few Public Affairs Officers expressed an interest in obtaining the results of this survey. In addition, five Commanders expressed an interest in the results. Of the 92 commanders who returned the survey, 79 answered the open-ended questions with constructive comments. This shows the concern Commanders have with their Public Affairs programs. This cooperation from Public Affairs Officers and Commanders was most encouraging and should provide the incentive for additional research in this area.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE
PART I
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your present rank?

    Lt. Colonel _____   Colonel _____

2. What is the rank of your Chief/Director of Public
    Affairs?

    2nd Lt. _____   Major   _____
    1st Lt. _____   Lt. Col. _____
    Capt.   _____   Colonel _____

3. How many officers are on your Public Affairs staff?

    1-2 _____   3-5 _____   6 or more _____

4. What is your current command designation?

    Air Base Group _____   Wing _____

5. What previous command experience do you have?

    None ____ Squadron ____ Air Base Group ____ Wing ____

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PART II

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE DESIGNED TO HELP
EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AIR FORCE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM TO COMMANDERS.   IN
ADDITION,   THIS   SURVEY   WILL   AID   IN
STRENGTHENING THOSE AREAS OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
THAT COMMANDERS FEEL ARE NOT MEETING THEIR
OBJECTIVES.   PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED
ON YOUR OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCES WITH PUBLIC
AFFAIRS OFFICERS.   YOUR REPLY TO THIS SURVEY
IS STRICTLY VOLUNTARY AND ANONYMOUS--DO NOT
INCLUDE YOUR NAME.   YOUR INFORMATION WILL BE
COMBINED WITH THAT OF OTHER COMMANDERS.   THE
TOTAL SURVEY RESULTS WILL BE USED IN A THESIS
FOR PRESENTATION TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY IN
THE   DEPARTMENT   OF   JOURNALISM   AND   MASS
COMMUNICATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
6. The success of my command policies depend largely on the Public Affairs program........	_____	_____	_____	____	_____
7. My Public Affairs staff keeps the per-sonnel under my command well informed of command interest items.	_____	_____	_____	____	_____
8. I support the Public Affairs program........	_____	_____	_____	____	_____
9. My Public Affairs staff keeps the local community well informed of Air Force initia-tives in our geographic area	_____	_____	_____	____	_____

10. Our Public
Affairs program
places too much
emphasis on
gaining favor-
able public
opinion for our
activities..... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

11. The Air
Force is well
accepted by the
local community _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

12. The Public
Affairs program
has a major
role in the
acceptance of
Air Force
initiatives in
my command..... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

13. My Public
Affairs officers
have as good a
chance for pro-
motion as other
members of my
staff.......... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

14. I accept my
Public Affairs
officer's ad-
vice on matters
pertaining to
public affairs. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

15. Keeping
members of my
command informed
is the most
important aspect
of my public
affairs staff.. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

16. The
effectiveness
of my Public
Affairs officer
depends on
formal education
and training... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

17. Gaining
community
acceptance of
Air Force
activities in
my command is the
most important
aspect of my
public affairs
staff.......... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

18. My Public
Affairs officer
fully supports
my command
interest
initiatives.... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

19. Working with
members of the
media is the most
important aspect
of my public
affairs staff.. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

20. I urge my
public affairs
staff to be in-
volved with civic
organizations.. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

21. The Air
Force releases
too much nega-
tive information
concerning our
activities..... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

22. I give
speeches at
community sites/
events......... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

23. Public
Affairs is a
needed function
for the Air
Force and my
command....... _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

24. My Public
Affairs officer
is as pro-
fessional and
knowledgeable in
his/her job as
other staff
members are in
their jobs..... ＿＿＿＿ ＿＿＿＿ ＿＿＿ ＿＿ ＿＿＿

25. My Public
Affairs officer
provides pro-
fessional advice
on public affairs
matters........ ＿＿＿＿ ＿＿＿＿ ＿＿＿ ＿＿ ＿＿＿

26. I consult my
Public Affairs
officer on aspects
of my command that
may impact on the
community...... ＿＿＿＿ ＿＿＿＿ ＿＿＿ ＿＿ ＿＿＿

27. I urge staff
members to consult
the Public Affairs
officer on initia-
tives in their
area that may
impact the
community or
command
population..... ＿＿＿＿ ＿＿＿＿ ＿＿＿ ＿＿ ＿＿＿

THE FOLLOWING THREE QUESTIONS?COMMENTS ARE OPEN-
ENDED ALLOWING YOU (IF YOU DESIRE) TO EXPAND ON
THE PRECEDING QUESTIONS.

28. The attributes I most desire in a Public Affairs Officer
are:

29. The quickest way a Public Affairs Officer can lose my support is:

30. Comments you feel are important for the Public Affairs community to know or understand to enhance relations with Commanders:

END

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